

PERFINED BRITISH OVERPRINTED STAMPS
BRITISH LEVANT & MOROCCO AGENCIES

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This article describes perfins that were applied to the stamps overprinted and surcharged for use in the British Postal Agencies in the Levant and Morocco. Perfins for postal usage are not known on the overprinted issues of any of the other British Postal Agencies. Many of the perfins are also known used on the other offices (e.g. French or Spanish in Morocco and French, German & Austrian in Levant). These however are beyond the scope of this article. The information given is based largely on my own collection with some supplemental information from earlier Bulletin reports.

British Post Offices in Levant

The British Levant stamps were locally perfined from 1895 until the last issue of 1921 and all known perfins used on the British Levant issues are covered. The Levant offices were closed at the outbreak of the Great War in September 1914 and the Constantinople office was re-opened in 1919 and finally closed in September 1923. The only other office re-opened after the war was Smyrna, which was closed in September 1922.

Figure 1

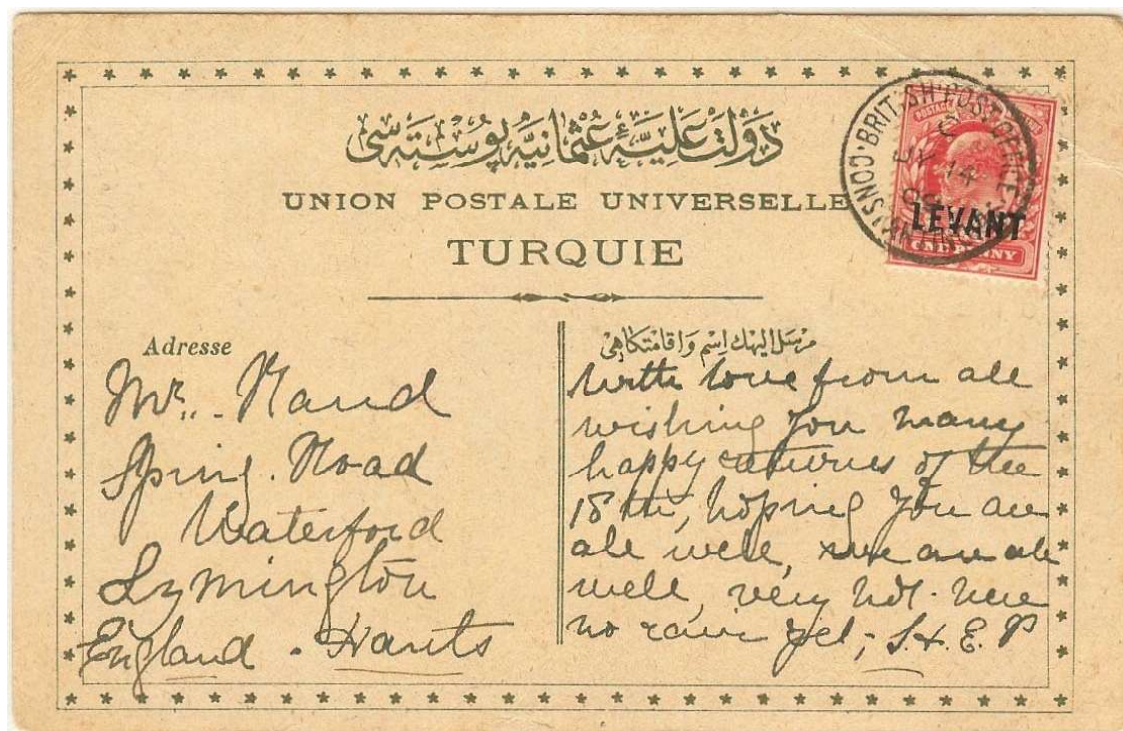
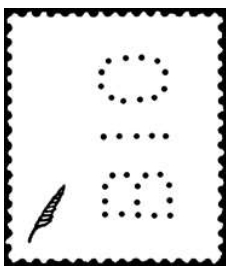


Figure 1 shows a postcard franked with 1d King Edward on stamp overprinted LEVANT and perfined BIO as rate to Britain, cancelled with single ring CONSTANTINOPLE mark dated JY 14 09.



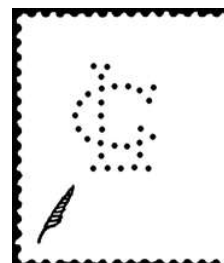
The BIO perfins were used by the Banque Imperiale Ottomane in Constantinople on the British Levant surcharges and overprints during the period 1896 to 1914. The following values are known with the BIO perfin. The die can be found struck horizontally and vertically.

Queen Victoria	1887-96	SG4	40 par on 2½d purple & blue
		SG5*	80 par on 5d purple & blue
		SG6	4 Pi. on 10d purple & carmine

* reported by Philip E Robinson Bulletin 335 April 2005

King Edward VII	1902-05	SG8	40 par. on 2½d blue
		SG9	80 par. on 5d purple & blue
		SG10	4 pi. on 10d purple & carmine
	1906	SG13	1 pi. on 2½d blue
		SG14	2 pi. on 5d purple & blue
King George V	1909	SG16	30 par. on 1½d dull pur. & grn
	1913-14	SG37	1¼ pi. on 3d violet
		SG38	1¾ pi. on 4d grey-green
King Edward VII	1905	SGL1	½d green
		SGL2	1d scarlet
		SGL3	1½d dull purple & yell-green
King George V		SGL16	½d green profile head

By 1910 the quality of the BIO perfins had deteriorated due to blunt and damaged pins, which is particularly evident in a block of four 1¼ PIASTRE surcharges that I have in my collection. Moreover, the irregular positioning suggest that little care was taken in feeding strips of stamps through the perfin machine.



The CL monogram perfins were used by Credit Lyonnais in Constantinople on British Levant surcharges and overprints during the period 1902-1923. The King

George V stamp is a recent find and was used in July 1923, which implies that the CL perfins were being used right up until the BPO in Constantinople closed in September 1923.

King Edward VII	1902-05	SG8	40 par. on 2½d blue
	1906	SG23	1 pi. on 2½d blue
	1911	SG35	1 pi. on 2½d blue
	1905	SGL2	1d Red
King George V	1921	SG41	30 par. on ½d green



OCM perfins were used by the Ottoman Cloth Manufacturers in Smyrna on the British Levant surcharges from 1905 to 1913.

King Edward VII 1911 SG25 1 pi. on 2½d blue

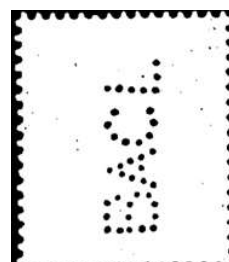
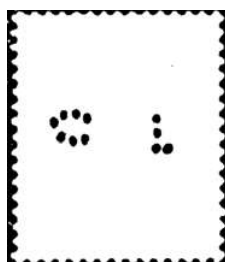
B.C.I perfins were used by the Banca Commerciale Italiana in Constantinople on the British Levant surcharges issued in 1921.



King George V 1921 SG41 30 par. on ½d green
 SG43 3¾ pi. on 2½d blue
 SG46 15 pi. on 10d blue



The perfin die P.M. has been reported by Susan McEwen in The Overprinter used on a King Edward VII 1 piastre on 2½d blue with a Smyrna cancellation. The die is believed to have been used by Paul Milberg, Smyrna.



In Bulletin 208 December 1983 Keith Lloyd reported three additional dies as used on British Levant overprints however the exact details of the values and issues are unknown and the stamps weren't illustrated.

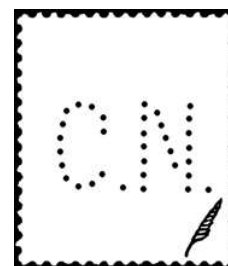
The two CL dies were reported as “probably used” by Credit Lyonnaise and the BACL dies as “probably used” by British Aluminium Cie Ltd.

However great care needs to be taken with these three dies as a number of forgeries of Levant overprints have been found on perfined stamps. None of the dies have been reported elsewhere and the BACL perfin is probably one of these forgeries as the perfin die is known used in Britain. Other Levant forgeries that have been reported include J6090.03bM and F1490.02 on a 40 paras on a 2½d QV Jubilee and J7950.01 on a King Edward VII 1d, which had a London cancellation!

Morocco Agencies

The Morocco Agencies issues were perfined from the early Gibraltar overprints until 1954, when the French Government banned the use of perfins on French stamps, at which time the French banks ceased using perfins altogether. All perfins known on the British Morocco Agencies issues are covered. Perfins were used on the Morocco Agencies stamps from 1907 until 1954, when France declared the use of perfins on French stamps to be illegal.

The C.N. perfins of the Comptoire Nationale d’Escompte were used in Tangier during 1907 and 1908 on the Gibraltar period Morocco Agencies overprints.



King Edward VII	1905-06	SG24	10c dull purple/red
		SG26	20c grey green & carmine

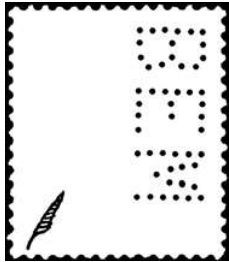
The BEM perfins were used by the Banque d’Etat du Maroc throughout Morocco during the period 1917 to 1954. During that period, a number of different dies were provided for the various regional groups of banks.

French Zone

King George V	Type 1	SG221	50c. on 5d yellow-brown
	Type 1	SG223	1fr. on 10d blue
King George V	Type 2	SG206	40c. on 4d grey-green
King George V	Type 3	SG210	1fr. on 10d blue

International Zone

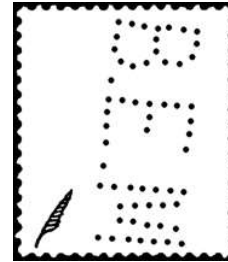
King George V	Type 2	SG235	½d Green
	Type 2	SG234	2d Orange
	Type 2	SG46	3d Violet
King George VI	Type 2	SG249	10c. on 1d scarlet (TANGIER)



Type 1



Type 2



Type 3

- Type 1 The 16mm by 6mm format perfin was used in Saffi, Fez and Casablanca
- Type 2 The 15mm by 6mm format perfin was used in Mazagan, Mogador, Tetuan and Tangier
- Type 3 The 20 mm by 8mm format perfin with full stops between the letters was used in Rabat

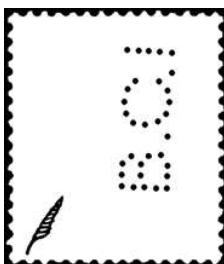
Figure 2



Figure 2 shows a registered cover addressed to Celje in Yugoslavia from the Tanger branch of the Banque d'Etat de Maroc, charged at

5½d for the 2½d overseas rate and 3d registration fee and hand-stamped 'RECOMMANDE' and 'BY OVERLAND ROUTE'. The adhesives are cancelled by the oval 'REGISTERED BRITISH P.O. TANGIER' canceller dated 10 DE 35. On the reverse there is a Celje receiving mark dated 15th December.

The letter has a mixed franking of GV photogravure ½d green and GV Block Cypher 2d orange die II overprinted TANGIER together with GV 3d violet watermark Simple Cypher overprinted MOROCCO AGENCIES. All three stamps are perfined BEM in the 15 mm by 6 mm (Type 2) format used by the Tangier branch.



B.C.I perfins were used by Banca Commerciale Italiana in Casablanca on the French Currency Morocco Agencies overprints from 1919 to 1954.

King George V	SG200	3fr on 2/6d choc (Bradbury Wilkinson)
	SG202	5c on ½d green
	SG203	10c on 1d red
	SG205	25c on 2½d blue
	SG207	50c on 5d yellow-brown
	SG210	1F on 10d turquoise
	SG211	1F 50c on 1/- brown
	SG215	25c on 2½d blue (Silver Jubilee)
	SG219	25c on 2½d blue
	SG221	50c on 5d yellow-brown
	SG225	3fr on 2/6d choc (Waterlow re-engraved)

Lastly the SM perfin is known used by Société Marseillaise de Crédit in Casablanca during the period between 1922 and 1954.

King George V	SG206	40 c on 4d slate-green
	SG208	75 c on 9d olive-green



If any members of the Society have any further information on these two groups of perfins please forward details of the perfin type and issue to the Bulletin editor.